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ing, his book equally represents a greatly raised bar for socially relevant, self-reflective archaeological research. I do not believe he has achieved this yet, but I applaud his identification of the issues and his initial efforts to resolve them. I greatly look forward to his next attempt, for he has set out a series of admirable and difficult goals and, realistically speaking, it would be unfair to expect full resolution at first try. In the meantime this book is a very important contribution to Australian prehistory, and it deserves wide reading on this account as well as owing to the theoretical problems it raises, even if these are not yet solved.

David S. Whitley  
 ICOMOS-CAR  
 447 Third Street  
 Fillmore, CA 93015  
 USA  
 email: huitli@impulse.net

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## Identity, Fundamentalism and Archaeology in Modern South Asia

*Archaeology in the Third World: a History of Indian Archaeology since 1947*, by D.K. Chakrabarti, 2003. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd; ISBN 81-246-0217-4 hardback, £30.00, ix + 281 pp.

Robin Coningham & Catherine Hardman

A section focusing on the relationship between archaeology and identity in South Asia was published in *Antiquity* in 2000. As editors, Nick Lewer (conflict resolution) and Coningham (South Asian archaeology) wished to investigate the role played by archaeology and politics in the creation of identities. Expectations of a close relationship between archaeology and politics were realized as one potential contributor withdrew as he left his country following a coup and another after being appointed a High Commissioner. That collection of papers forms part of a growing corpus of studies of the development of archaeology within South Asia (Ratnagar in press), to which Dilip Chakrabarti's book is one of the most recent contributions. Those expecting this book to be a continuation of his *History of Indian Archaeology: from the Beginning to 1947* will be surprised. Not only is the new volume entirely dedicated to India but, whilst the former was organized around the work of Alexander Cunningham, John Marshall and Mortimer Wheeler, his new volume covers 1947 to 2000 through a series of reviews of publications. Furthermore, the bulk of the volume focuses on four issues of archaeological significance: education, religious fundamentalism, Third World archaeology and nationalism. Here we will first review Chakrabarti's book before discussing one of the broader issues that it raises: that of identity and the destruction of cultural heritage.

The first half of the volume narrates the development of Indian archaeology from 1947 to 2000 in two chapters, 1947 to 1973, and 1974 to 2000. The first section of Chapter 1 details the period between 1947 and 1952 through a study of the journal of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), *Ancient India*. Editorials written by ASI Directors-General are blended with individual papers and books in order to chart the foundations of post-colonial archaeology. This is followed by an examination of the period from 1954 to 1965, a timespan which the author

admits is 'arbitrary' (p. 14) but coincides with the publication of the journal, *Indian Archaeology – a Review*, which contains annual reports of fieldwork throughout India. Reviews of individual papers and books are linked by commentaries but certain sections appear descriptive, for example, the recording of the two-year delay to *Ancient India* (p. 21). In contrast, Chakrabarti then analyzes every excavation in India between 1953 and 1965 and concludes that only 39 of 144 sites were published (p. 31).

The third section covers 1966 to 1973 and includes the publication of *Puratattva* (the Bulletin of the Indian Archaeological Society) as well as textbooks by the Allchins (1968) and Malik (1968). For this, the final section of Chapter 1, Chakrabarti records a poorer record of excavation publication with only 19 out of 112 published (p. 51) but he concludes that this period was one of the expansion of archaeology, both in terms of the number of excavations as well as in the participation of Indian universities.

The next phase, covered in Chapter 2, opens with the publication of Sankalia's synthesis *Prehistory and Protohistory of India and Pakistan* (1974) and considers two of the most commonly used textbooks Agrawal's *Archaeology of India* (1982) and Allchin & Allchin's *Rise of Civilisation in India and Pakistan* (1982) before reviewing recent contributions, including his own book (Chakrabarti 1999). Strangely, Deccan College's magnificent volumes on Chalcolithic Inamgaon (Dhavalikar *et al.* 1988) are not heralded as the best Indian excavation publication and there is no mention of Mark Kenoyer *et al.*'s pioneering ethnoarchaeological studies (1991). Assessing the publication rates for this period, Chakrabarti concludes that although India invests a substantial sum in archaeological infrastructure, little attention is paid to outcomes (p. 153) and blame is laid at the feet of the 'authorities'.

The second half of the book tackles issues confronting Indian archaeology today. The first issue concerns the relationship between heritage management, education and nationalism. Identifying a misapplication of Ford Foundation grants (p. 162), Chakrabarti opens a fascinating study of the Indian legal framework and its articulation with the ASI and considers the impact of dams (p. 178) and the illicit trade in antiquities (p. 180). An equally stimulating section summarizes the relationship between archaeology and education in India, with Chakrabarti concluding that India is still dominated by colonial Indology (p. 194). Chapter 4 discusses religious fundamentalism with reference to the 1992 Ayodhya incident but also expands the book's Indian remit to

discuss the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas. Unlike many commentators who have concentrated on the sequence at Ayodhya (Ratnagar in press), Chakrabarti concentrates on the professional gulf, which divides Indian academics into 'progressives' or 'reactionaries' (p. 203) and comments on their links with political parties (p. 204). Chapter 5 offers a definition of Third World archaeology and argues that archaeology in the third world should remain part of historical studies to remain relevant. Chakrabarti also suggests that there is a tension between foreign and local scholars 'There is a distinct First World tradition of academic intolerance and/or contempt for any contrary opinion emerging from the Third World' (pp. 221–2), although acknowledging that this is lessened by 'one world archaeology'. The volume has no conclusion but ends with an appendix, which incorporates sections of his earlier *Antiquity* contribution (Chakrabarti 2000).

The volume, devoid of illustrations, is a fascinating personal analysis of post-colonial archaeology in India, all the more so as it is written by an individual who straddles both worlds. Not only does it provide original data, such as excavation publication rates, but it does not hesitate to name issues facing Indian archaeologists and attribute responsibility for failings.

Let us develop Chakrabarti's suggestion that incidents like those at Ayodhya and Bamiyan 'are likely to get worse' (p. 208) by examining three South Asian examples in order to explore whether there was a commonality, related to identity, between them. The three are the 1992 destruction of the Babri mosque at Ayodhya by militant Hindus, the 1998 destruction of the Temple of the Buddha's Tooth in Sri Lanka by Tamil separatists and the 2001 destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban.

Whilst each is complex, it is possible to identify factors involved in their targeting. The Babri mosque, for example, was destroyed because of the strength of popular belief that it was constructed on a Hindu temple marking the birthplace of Rama, a temple destroyed by the Mughal ruler, Babur (Rao 1999, 46). Unsupported archaeologically, this concept captivated the minds of militant Hindu groups who wished to release Rama from his 'imprisonment' (Rao 1999, 47) by destroying the mosque and building a new temple. In effect, the 'destruction of the mosque became a direct response to a perceived wrong of 500 years ago' (Bernbeck & Pollock 1996, 140), although the ongoing dispute concerning Kashmir, as well as the Indo-Pak wars had further polarized these identities.

The Temple of the Tooth in Sri Lanka was se-

lected as a target owing to the importance of the Buddha's Relic to the majority Sinhalese population (Coningham & Lewer 1999, 863). Although Sri Lanka is a Democratic Socialist Republic, the close link between the Buddhist order, political patronage and the majority Sinhalese population led some to state after the bombing (*The Tamil Monitor* 30/3/1998): 'While the bombing of the Temple of the Tooth ought to be condemned . . . the targeting of the temple, a symbol of Buddhist chauvinism is the unfortunate consequence of militant Buddhism'. The fact that the majority of restored cultural sites in the island are Buddhist has added to this perception that the past supports the identity of a single section of the island's population — the Sinhalese (Coningham & Lewer 1999, 865). Indeed, it is ironic that Tambiah stated in 1986 that the government of Sri Lanka must feel 'free to sponsor the restoration of Buddhist monuments . . . It would also behove a Sri Lankan government to recognize at the same time that there are monuments . . . that are neither Sinhalese or Buddhist' (1986, 126).

In the case of Afghanistan, the situation is more complex as Afghanistan is predominately Muslim and has no population of Buddhists. The Hazara minority, however, are Shi'a as opposed to the Sunni Taliban and some commentators have stressed this difference. Indeed, Rashid stated that the Buddhas had become identified with this minority (*The Daily Telegraph* 3/3/2001): 'The statues have become a symbol of Hazara pride and resistance to the Taliban. By destroying them, the Taliban aims to destroy the Hazara cultural identity'. Undoubtedly, the destruction of the Buddhas was also linked to the enhancement of the Taliban's identity as an ultra-orthodox group destroying images.

Whilst it is clearly ironic that one of the explanations for the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, built by an extinct Buddhist community, by the orthodox Muslim Taliban was to rob the Shi'a Hazara community of their identity, similar patterns are encapsulated within the other two examples. The Temple of the Tooth was constructed by Sri Vikrama Rajasimha II, a south Indian Tamil-speaking Hindu, who was requested to take the Sri Lankan throne by Sinhalese nobles because the last king died heirless (Coningham & Lewer 2000a,b, 709). As a result, Tamil separatists damaged the creation of a Tamil ruler as well as adjacent shrines to Vishnu and Pattini — Hindu deities incorporated into Buddhism. Finally, 'Muslims living in India are in many cases not even the descendants of the Mughal invaders of the Mid-

dle Ages but rather member of low Hindu castes who have converted to Islam' (Bernback & Pollock 1996, 140) and many of those targeted by the militants in the aftermath of the Babri destruction were probably the descendants of such converts.

On reflection, we have to stress the very different variables involved in these three disasters. All are geographically diverse and have involved the targeting of monuments of very different religious traditions. The perpetrators and victims of each are also different; the crowd at Ayodhya, including militants from the majority Hindu population, was supported, or rather not halted by the government; the Temple of the Tooth — associated with the majority identity — was bombed by separatists from the Tamil minority; and the Bamiyan Buddhas, representing no contemporary community in Afghanistan, were destroyed by the Taliban government. The three monuments are also very different in terms of age as the Babri mosque was dated to the fifteenth century AD, the Temple of the Tooth between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries AD and the Buddhas to the first millennium AD. Each was afforded different protection as the Babri mosque and Bamiyan Buddhas were protected by national laws, and the Temple of the Tooth internationally by UNESCO. Finally although it may be fashionable to attribute such conflicts to the legacy of colonial Indologies, this cannot be the case for Afghanistan, which was historically independent.

In conclusion, it should be stated that the one element of commonality between these incidents is that the historical rationale behind the suppression or emulation of identities was based on incorrect readings of the past. Despite this absence of pattern, it is very worrying that they all occurred within a span of ten years. Indeed, it is to be expected that as long as identities, whether regional, religious or national, derive part of their strength from the past, cultural monuments will be targeted for enhancement or suppression. It is also to be expected that with increasing availability of weaponry, such episodes will become more frequent; in this light, Chakrabarti's bleak prediction may well be proven.

Robin Coningham  
Department of Archaeological Sciences  
University of Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD7 1DP  
UK  
Email: R.A.E.Coningham@bradford.ac.uk

Catherine Hardman  
AHDS Archaeology  
King's Manor  
York  
YO1 7EP  
UK  
Email: csh3@york.ac.uk

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